

Surrendering August

by Michael Gillan Maxwell

Surrendering August

early evening, late summer
walking down the lake road with the dogs
the sound of a tractor mowing the field above
grinding and clanking
tall grasses pulsate with cricket song
the water, placid and serene
opalescent pink and turquoise
a fish surfaces and dives
leaving ripples in concentric rings
on the far shore, in the vineyards
timed charges explode like the sun catching on fire
it scares crows away from the grapes
warm sunny afternoons and chilly evenings
sumac leaves, blood crimson
splashed across the blue forever
mornings laden with fog banks and soaking dew
migrating flocks wheel across the sky
air still warm from the day, but soon changing
into the fecund smell of damp coolness
black walnut trees already starting to turn
shedding golden leaves that flutter
like tears onto green grass
last to arrive and the first to go
a little girl rides her bike, training wheels still on
stops at the foot of the steep hill
she'll be climbing before long
but not for a while
kids going back to school
pinching their noses shut
as they hurl themselves off the dock

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into the cool blue water
already a memory
the season slipping away
away, like this day
like youth gobbled up
by the unremitting passage of time
it feels over too soon
already ending when it seems
it's only just begun
the pale rider draws closer
with each trip around the sun
I stand at the edge of the shoreline
the edge of the season
surrendering August

